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CHANDAMAMA

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NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 24 JUNE 1994 No. 12

THE MYSTERIOUS NECKLACE: As advised by his bosom friend Jayasena and other well-wishers and experts, King Vichitravarma builds a temple to install the granite idol with the glittering nosescrow. Earlier, when the idol was being dug out, the king was wearing the pearl necklace with mystical powers gifted to him by Jayasena. At the coronation of his son Jayavarma, the king gives him the necklace. King Varunadatta of Kambhoj comes to know of the necklace and wishes to possess it. He sends a beautiful dancer to the court of Jayavarma; however, Vichitravarma pre-empted a possible theft and saves the necklace without the knowledge of his son. After Vichitravarma's death, Jayasena hands over his letter to Jayavarma. It is about the necklace.

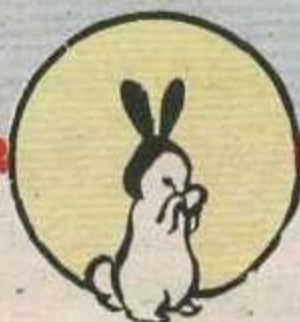
VEER HANUMAN: One day, Yamadharma, the king of the nether world, is in conversation with Rama. Sage Durvasa arrives in Ayodhya and seeks audience with Rama. Lakshmana asks him to wait, but the sage is impatient. To appease him, Lakshmana goes to Rama and thus disturbs Rama who is angry with Lakshmana. He has to be be-headed for his indiscretion. Lakshmana jumps into river Sarayu and takes his own life. Rama is sad. He decides to abdicate and coronate Lava and Kusa.

PLUS your favourite features **PANCHATANTRA** and **CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT**.

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Controlling Editor :
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Experience, the ideal touchstone

May 24 this year is Buddha Purnima. It is said of Prince Siddhartha that he was born on a full moon day (in 566 B.C. According to another calculation, 563 B.C.). It is a remarkable coincidence that he became the Enlightened One (Buddha) also on the same full moon day forty years later; and he attained Nirvana again on the same full moon day—but another forty years later.

How the prince renounced a happy life when he saw unhappiness all around, how he went out on an enquiry to find the root cause of the people's misery, and how ultimately he got enlightenment while sitting in meditation under a Bodhi tree are all widely known.

Among his advice to his disciples was one which said: "Do not accept what you are told on mere authority; do not accept anything merely because it is based on tradition; do not accept a statement merely because it is found in books, or it is taught by your teacher. Test everything on the touchstone of your reason and experience."

How practical the Buddha was! This spirit of enquiry should be part and parcel of each one's character. Whatever you see around you, whatever you hear from anybody, whatever you read, must be put through the sieve of your own experience. What is left in the sieve should be discarded. And when you want to share with others what is taken by you, ensure that what you give will be for their good.

Italy: A New Republic

It looks as though the people of Italy have decided to forget for some time the Communists and their Left allies who have been ruling them for the past over 45 years and give the rightists a chance to rule. In the landmark elections held on March 27 and 28, three right wing parties together scored more number of seats in the lower house of parliament than the erstwhile ruling party, Christian Democrats, and other Leftist parties could muster. As we go to press, the leader of "Forza Italia" (Go Italy), Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, was awaiting the call from President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro to form the 53rd post-War government which is expected to bring the country back to a federal republic.



Forza Italia got 155 seats, while the Northern Alliance, led by Mr. Gianfranco Fini, won 105 seats, and the Northern League of Mr. Umberto Bossi won 106 seats. All of them being rightist parties, they thought of a coalition which has an absolute majority in the 630-member lower house. Against their 58 per cent, the former Communists and their leftist allies have only 34 per cent of seats.

One common plank on which the three parties came together was the need to rewrite the country's Constitution, to make it more of a federal set-up, with the President elected by the people and the Prime Minister appointed by the Parliament. It was also agreed that the changes made in the Constitution will be put up before the people in the form of a referendum.

Italy, a peninsular country, is surrounded by the Adriatic Sea, the Ionian, the Tyrrhenian, the Ligurian, and the Mediterranean Sea. Quite a few islands in these seas are part of the country – like Sicily and Sardinia. History tells us that the Roman Republic ruled from 510 to 27 B.C. The succeeding Roman empire, the foundations of which were laid by Julius Caesar, existed from 27 B.C. to 476 A.D.

Italy was then witness to successive invasions after the decline of the Roman empire. Spain ruled over large areas of Italy from the 16th to the 18th century.

Later, the suzerainty passed on to Austria and then to France. Following the French emperor Napoleon's fall in the Battle of Waterloo (1815), there was a movement for independence and unification. This was achieved in 1870.

At the end of the Great War (1914-18), Benito Mussolini founded a totalitarian nationalist movement – Fascism – in Italy in 1919, and became Prime Minister three years later. He called himself *Il Duce* or the leader. He ruled the country like a dictator, and took Italy to the Second World War, by joining hands with the German dictator, Fuhrer Adolf Hitler. Mussolini fell from power in 1943, and was killed while fleeing the country. In 1946, monarchy was replaced by a republic. However, the country, which was beset with economic problems, suffered instability in administration, with as many as 52 governments being formed and going out of power, sometimes within days, in some 45 years.

Of late, political accommodation assumed serious proportions, with ruling parties often compromising with the Opposition parties and co-opting them into the government. As a result, corruption flourished, scandals erupted, and several people in high positions came to be indicted.



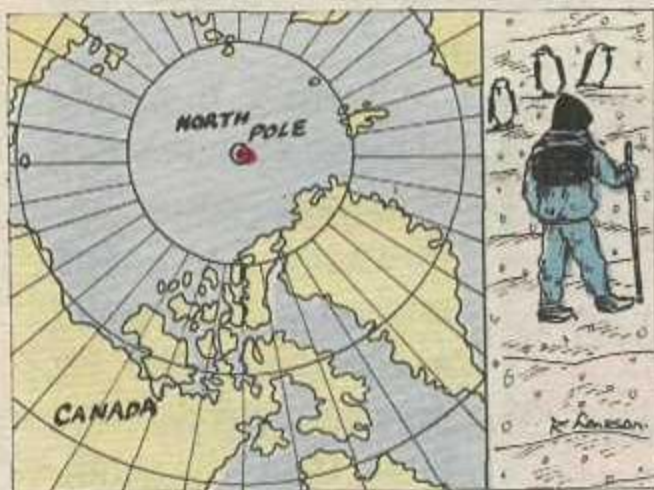
It was in the wake of these scandals that elections were announced and the people, who craved for a change, voted for rightists, who included less than 3-month-old Forza Italia. Its leader, 57-year-old Berlusconi, is a media magnate, owning the biggest TV network outside the U.S.A. He also owns the second biggest publishing empire in Europe, and is considered one of the richest men in the world. Not for nothing is this tycoon being looked up as the newest 'Caesar'.

NEWS FLASH



A breathless record

Hold *your* breath while you read this – about someone who held his breath and created a record! Peter Hirvell (27) of Sweden entered a pool and surfaced after 6 minutes and 3 seconds – holding his breath that long. He did not use any gadgets for this incredible exercise. The Zoophysiological Laboratory in Lund organised this event on February 25 last to determine man's capacity to survive without oxygen.



Alone to North Pole

Rupert Hadow (32) is a British explorer. On March 6, he embarked on a journey – alone, on foot, with no dogs to guide him, no motor transport, or even air support – along a 1,110 km route from Ward Hunt Island in the northwest of Canada to the North Pole. When he reaches there, he would have set a record for a solo trek. He will be the first person to do so.

Lucky number

Can the number plate of a car cost more than the vehicle itself? Albert Yeung, chairman of a property firm in Hong Kong, recently paid 1,670,000 dollars for a car plate carrying the number "9". How much the tycoon had paid for his car is kept a secret, but it is believed, the price is less than his bid at the auction organised by the Transport Department of the Island-nation of Hong Kong. Nine, in the local Cantonese dialect, sounds like the word for 'dog', and as this is the Year of the Dog in the Chinese calendar, it makes an auspicious number. Mr. Yeung had another attraction for this particular number plate: it had adorned the car owned by his late friend. The price he paid is believed to be a record for number



plates. The money raised in such auctions is generally used for charitable purposes.

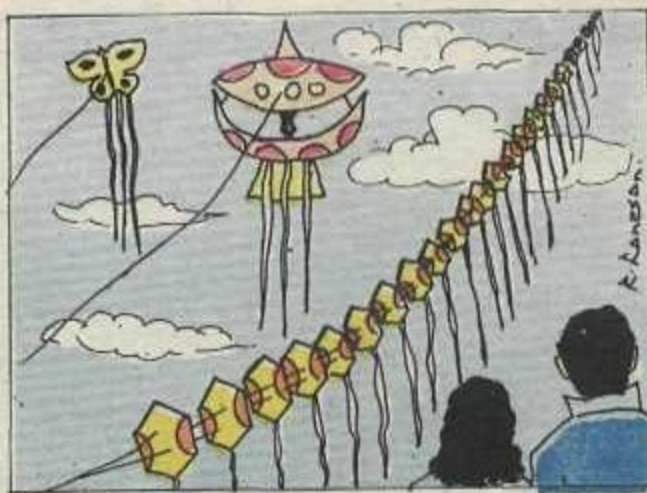
Kites ahoy!

Capital Bangkok's skies were dotted with kites of exotic colours and breath-taking shapes and sizes when Thailand hosted the International Kite Festival during the last week of March. As many as 12 countries participated in what is described as one of the greatest events in Asia. Among the kites seen were an

80-metre long "centipede" kite from Germany, a "warrior" kite from Japan, 5-metre kites from Indonesia, gold-and-silver kites from Malaysia and Nepal, and 'no-wind' kites from the U.S.A.

Alive after earthquake

This cat was not rat-taled even after being caught in earthquake debris for, no, not four but 41 days! When earthquake struck parts of Los Angeles in January, Tiffany, of a Persian mix, was trapped inside a storage closet where she had taken refuge. The door to the closet was shut and the poor cat got locked in – till she was discovered when some neighbours went into the closet and found Tiffany shivering and reduced to just skin and bones in forty days of captivity. On seeing the



people, she started purring and they knew she was alive. The saying that a cat has nine lives is very true in the case of Tiffany.

A "light", though not light

The name Rong Haiming means 'Sea Light', though it has no relevance to his weight at birth – 8.1kg (17.7 lb). This baby boy was born to a 28-year-old woman of Tangshan, in north-eastern China, in January. The doctors, who had to perform a caesarian operation to bring out the baby, were astonished at his weight, of which they were convinced only after he was



weighed on three different scales. However, he seems to have brought light into his parents' lives and they chose a very "light" name!

SPORTS

SNIPPETS

Sprinter among swimmers

The World Cup circuit of swimming meets was held in venues in seven different countries. In five meetings, 22-year-old Alexander Popov of Russia set six world records in short-course marks. He capped his unprecedented record-breaking spree in Paris, when he swam 50 metres freestyle in 21.50 seconds on March 13. The previous record of 21.60 seconds was set by Britain's Mark Foster in February 1993. Popov's success is attributed to the training he had in Australia. He first made his mark in 1991



when he won the 100m freestyle to equal the European record. In the Barcelona Olympics a year later, he dethroned the

50m and 100m freestyle champion, Matt Blondi of the U.S.A. By then, Russia was a separate entity and he could easily proceed to Australia, where he was trained by Gennady Touretsky. He returned from Australia last August and won the 50m and 100m freestyle in the European Championship in England. In the World Cup series, he bettered his record in 100m freestyle one after another at four consecutive meetings.

More swim records

Franck Schott of France set a world record in 50m backstroke in World Cup finals in Paris on March 27. His 24.60 seconds broke Alexander Popov's 24.66 seconds made a few days earlier.

Another French swimmer, Franck Esposito, swam 200m butterfly in 1 min. 53.05 seconds, also in Paris on March 27. The previous world mark was 1:54.21 held by Danyon Loader of New Zealand since 1993.

On March 22, Britain's Mark Foster beat his own short course 50 m butterfly world best time in the World Cup circuit in Sheffield, England. He clocked 23.68 seconds, slicing 0.04 seconds off his record of February 1993 made in Germany. It was his fifth win in five World Cup events.

Other world records

Speed-skater Bonnie Blair of the U.S.A. broke her own record in 500m at the Calgary Olympic Oval on March 26. She clocked 38.99 seconds to beat her previous record of 39.10sec. set in the

1988 Olympics at Calgary.

In the men's 1,000 metres on the same day, Japan's Yasunori Miyabe's 1 min. 12.37 seconds was the world's best timing.

In the Junior 3,000, individual pursuit at the Australian Track Cycling championships at Adelaide, Bradley McGee of Australia broke his own world record within 24 hours. His timing of 3:19.87 sec. on March 8 was 2.09 secs. faster



than his world record ride in the qualifying round the previous day. The record till then was with Roman Saprykine of Russia – 3: 23.79 seconds.

At the International Track Meet at Karlsruhe on March 1, two women – Sun Cayan of China and Nicole Riegar of Germany soared 4.08 metres in indoor pole vault, which was a new world record. It was an improvement by 1 cm over the earlier record held by Sun Cayan.

A different marathon

It is a record of a different nature – not the timing in a marathon, but the number of times he has been running a distance of 42 km., between the towns of Pilsen and Nyrany in Bohemia. Pavel Nechansky of Czechoslovakia has been running this distance *every day* since June 1, 1993. On March 7, he ran for the 280th time without a break, to beat the 279 marathons run by Robert Sweegall



between October 1982 and July 1983. Nechansky stopped this daily routine when he finished 300 runs on March 27.

Joins "4,000 Club"

India's Captain, Mohammed Azharuddin, is the sixth Indian batsman to score more than 4,000 runs in Test Cricket. He joined the "4,000 Club" when he took 63 runs at Hamilton, New Zealand, on March 21. He played his first Test in 1984-85 at Calcutta against England and has since scored 14 centuries in 62 Tests. The other batsmen are Gavaskar (10,122), Vengsarkar (6,868), G. Vishwanath (6,014), Kapil Dev (5,248), and Amarnath (4,378).





IF YOU'LL PERMIT ME..... I SHALL CARRY YOU ON MY BACK!

IT'S VERY GOOD OF YOU!

THE FROG INFORMS HIS FRIENDS OF THIS STRANGE OCCURRENCE AND FINALLY TELLS THE KING.

WONDERFUL! LET'S GO AND TAKE A JOY RIDE ON THE BACK OF THE BLACK SNAKE.



ALL THE FROGS FOLLOW THEIR KING AND GO TO WHERE MANDAVISHA IS RESTING.

WELCOME, O KING OF NOBLE FROGS!! I'M AT YOUR SERVICE.



CAN I HAVE A RIDE NOW?



CERTAINLY. I CAN GLIDE, I CAN TROT, I CAN GALLOP.... GET ON TO MY BACK.



IT'S SIMPLY THRILLING!.... RIDING ON A SNAKE.

OHI AHI WHAT A RIDE!



THE NEXT DAY, THE SNAKE PRETENDS TO BE TIRED AND WEAK AND CRAWLS SLOWLY.

MY DEAR MANDAVISHA! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?



He who, having entertained his guests, looks out for others yet to come, will be a welcome guest in heaven.

— Thirukkural





Bear with reproach even when you can retaliate; but to forget it will be still better than that.



If they observed their own faults as they observe the faults of others, would any evil happen to men?

FROM BEHIND THE IDOL, THE BRAHMIN SPEAKS....

I'M PLEASED WITH YOU. I GRANT YOUR PRAYER!



PREPARE SWEETS WITH GHEE AND BUTTER AND SERVE THEM TO HIM EVERY DAY. SOON HE SHALL GO BLIND.

I'M BLESSED!



THE FOOLISH WOMAN BELIEVES IT WAS THE VOICE OF THE GODDESS. EVERY DAY SHE PREPARES TASTEFUL DISHES FOR HER HUSBAND.



ONE DAY....

AHA! IT'S VERY TASTY!



FEW DAYS PASS....

MY DEAR! MY EYESIGHT IS FAILING, AND I'M UNHAPPY.

MAYBE DUE TO OLD AGE.



AFTER A FEW DAYS....

DEAR! MY EYESIGHT IS GETTING WORSE!



SOMETIME LATER....

ALAS! I'M COMPLETELY BLIND!



THANK YOU, O! DIVINE MOTHER!



NOW, I CAN SAFELY BRING MY LOVER HERE.



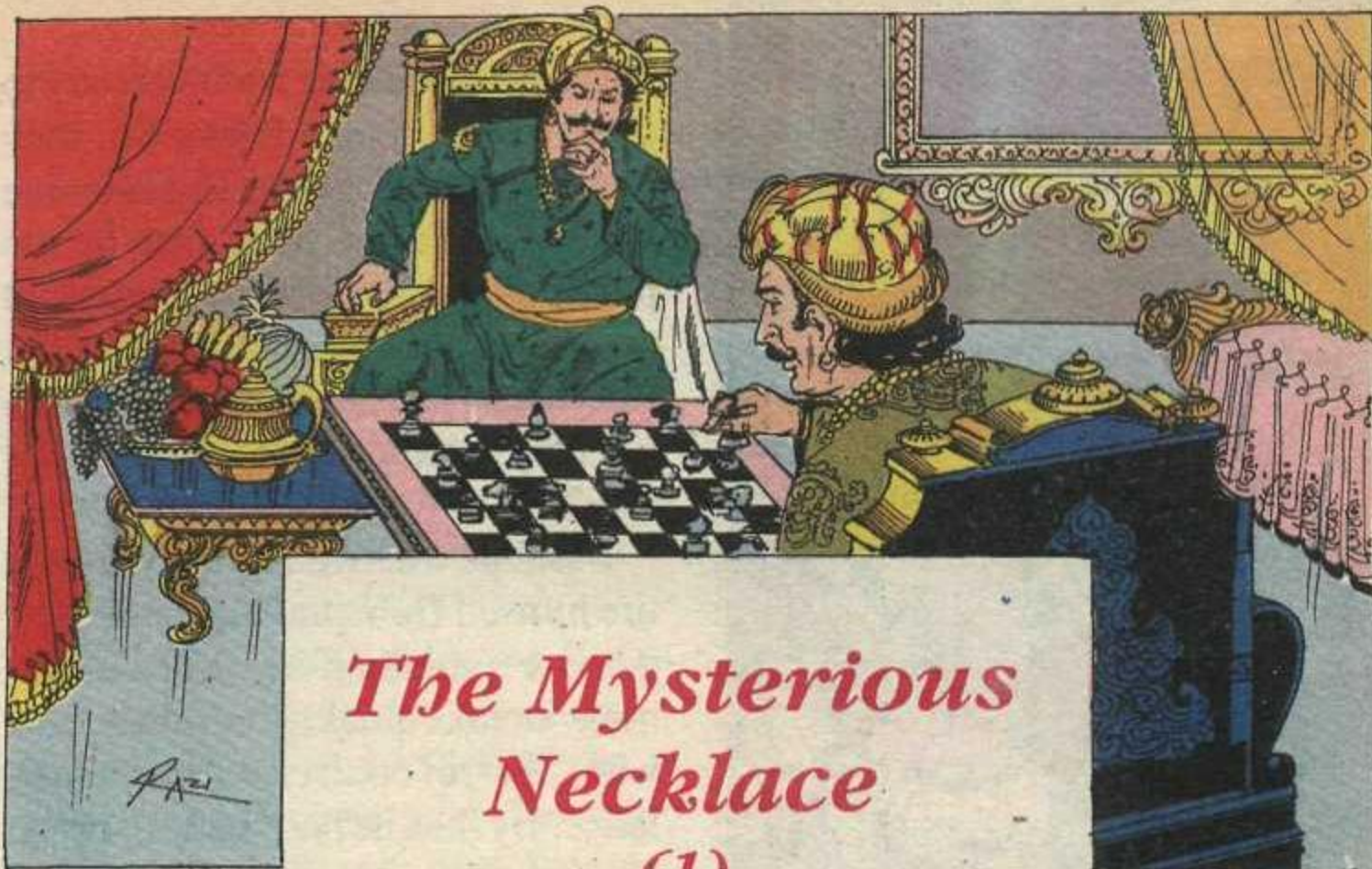
If a man has the power to abstain from falsehood, it will be well with him, even though he practises no other virtue.

How to pickle money

P.U.M. Annamalai, of Virudhunagar, took some time to complete his homework and then rushed to the park where his brother Vadivelu and their friends were in the process of choosing their teams for a game of football. He found them arguing over certain names and saw that one or two of their friends were yet to arrive. As he had not heard their conversation from the beginning, he asked his brother, "Were you referring to Pandian?" Pandian was one of his close friends. "Pandian?" echoed Vadivelu. "No, he's a horse of a different colour." They did not wait for more friends to join them and started playing. While they were returning home, Annamalai wondered what his brother meant by '*horse of a different colour*'. It simply means, something entirely different.

Mohan Khasbekar, of Pune, asks: What is the meaning of 'to salt away'? We often come across this expression in newspaper reports, of people who had "salted away" considerable amounts of money in foreign banks, illegally. Such money is supposed to be used for transactions outside the country or for their own use while abroad – for all of which one needs official approval and sanction. Just as we add salt to vegetables and meat to preserve them, money is preserved or stored in such a way that it can be used at a later day or convenient time. Another phrase frequently used is "to stash away". When someone transfers a lot of money outside his country illegally, we say he has "spirited away" the money.





The Mysterious Necklace (1)

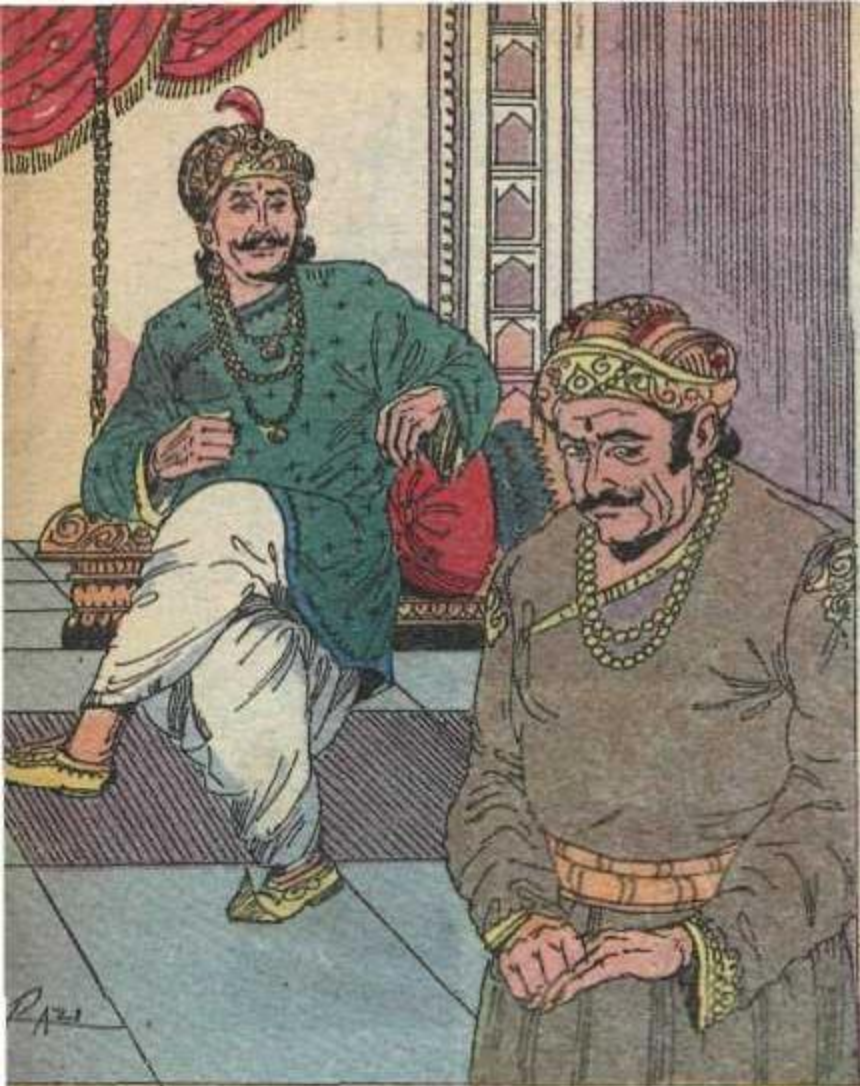
Sushena once ruled over the kingdom of Kosala. Jayasena was his bosom friend. More than being a friend, he had the privilege of advising the king on administrative and defence matters. Sushena reposed great confidence in his friend. The king had a weakness for chess, and often Jayasena played with him, as he found it the best time to offer his advice—unlike in the *darbar* where the king would be surrounded by his ministers and courtiers.

One day, unlike on many occa-

sions earlier, Jayasena won the game. "The world is strange!" he exclaimed, as King Sushena leaned on his chair to take a break. "Today, I've defeated you. But do you know, my good friend, I get a better pleasure when I get defeated by my own daughter?"

Keertisena was his only daughter. A charming girl, she was well behaved and courteous to everybody. She was very intelligent, too. King Sushena was aware of all her qualities, yet he feigned ignorance. "You never told me that your daughter

A STRANGE TEST



plays chess!" the king protested. "Is she so clever?"

"Don't take my word," said Jayasena. "Why don't you test her, Sushena?" He showed off, like a father who would be proud of his child.

"Is that so?" said the king. "All right, I shall come to your place tomorrow and play a game or two with your daughter."

The next evening, King Sushena went to Jayasena's residence. After some pleasantries, he and Keertisena began a game. The girl matched the king's careful moves by making very quick moves. Keertisena won the

first game. The king was not ready to give up after one defeat. So, they played a second game. The outcome was no different from that of the previous one. Before the king could decide whether he would play again, Keertisena had set the board. "Shall we play another game, Your Majesty?"

Sushena who would normally not tire himself from playing game after game—especially if he was on a winning streak—quickly collected his wits. "Yes, of course, my dear young lady!" By then he had already started admiring her intelligence, and her beauty, too. He was not tired, but he probably took it easy and, no wonder, he was defeated a third time.

Jayasena saved the situation for the king. "Keertisena it's time for dinner. Go and see whether everything is ready. We must not delay the king's return to the palace."

When the girl got up and went inside, Sushena remarked, "I admit she's very clever. I was carefully watching her; she does make intelligent moves. And she is pretty fast, too. I must find time to play with her again."

Keertisena soon came back. "Your Majesty, please be gracious enough to join us at dinner," she said



and led him to the glittering dining hall. She played the perfect hostess. Jayasena followed behind.

While eating, King Sushena did not forget to shower his appreciation and praise on Keertisena. "Please accept my congratulations, Jayasena. You've a clever daughter in Keertisena. Who knows, if she had been born a boy, she would not have amassed fame (*keerti*)!"

"Thank you," said Jayasena. "She's equally an expert in the use of arms, as well, my friend. She can be a match to any brave soldier. Though a girl, she is as brave as a man. I'm very proud of her!"

"Is that so?" remarked Sushena, with disbelief. "But she can't be braver or stronger than my son, Keertivarma."

Jayasena thought for a while. He did not wish to say anything in haste. Sushena waited for his friend's reaction. When he found Jayasena silent, he said, "Now, don't worry, Jayasena. I shall give your daughter yet another test. And if she were to succeed in that, I shall accept her as my daughter-in-law. And in case she fails, I shall even then treat her as my own daughter and find a suitable husband for her."

Jayasena was very happy over the



king's offer, though he was intrigued. What kind of test would he have in mind for his daughter? "You know, Keertivarma has been attending the *gurukul* run by sage Krishna-chandra," said Sushena. "He'll complete his training there the next full moon day, and he'll start for the palace the very next day. He'll be alone. Your daughter should waylay him and take him to the ancient Shakti temple on the eastern frontier of the kingdom and hold him captive there for three days. She should do this all by herself, and should not take anyone's help. If she succeeds, then I shall arrange for their wedding soon."



She must ensure that Keertivarma does not escape from the temple."

Jayasena wondered how he should react or what he would say in reply. Sushena put him at ease by saying, "Don't worry, I shall explain everything to Keertisena. Please call her."

Jayasena sent for his daughter. When she came, the king told her everything. "Your father has been praising you sky-high. Do you think you can accept the challenge I've thrown?"

"I don't think it is difficult at all!" said Keertisena. "I take the challenge," she added with a smile.

Jayasena could not believe his ears,

though he knew his daughter was very clever and he could depend on her. The moment King Sushena was gone, Keertisena asked her father, "Why should you feel diffident, father? Have faith in me. I shall succeed in this test." She infused some courage in her father.

"You've already accepted the challenge and there's no going back on that!" said Jayasena. "I know everything about the prince. He is the cleverest among the pupils of Krishnachandra. He is an adept in politics, general knowledge, and weaponry, and nobody can defeat him easily in any of these disciplines. It may not be that easy to take him captive and confine him in an open temple for three days. And you've to attempt this alone. I'm not sure whether you'll succeed in this tough test," said Jayasena with a deep sigh.

"What I can't understand is, father, why should the king set such a test for me?" said Keertisena, who was now pensive.

"I'm sorry, my darling daughter," said Jayasena. "It's all my fault. I was telling the king about your accomplishments, your capabilities. Perhaps he misunderstood me and thought I was challenging him."

"I'm afraid something like that has



happened," said Keertisena. "One should not boast of one's abilities. That'll only make one arrogant. A father can be proud of his son or daughter. But that pride should not turn into conceit. Maybe you were praising me too much, and the king took it amiss. That's why he decided to give me a test."

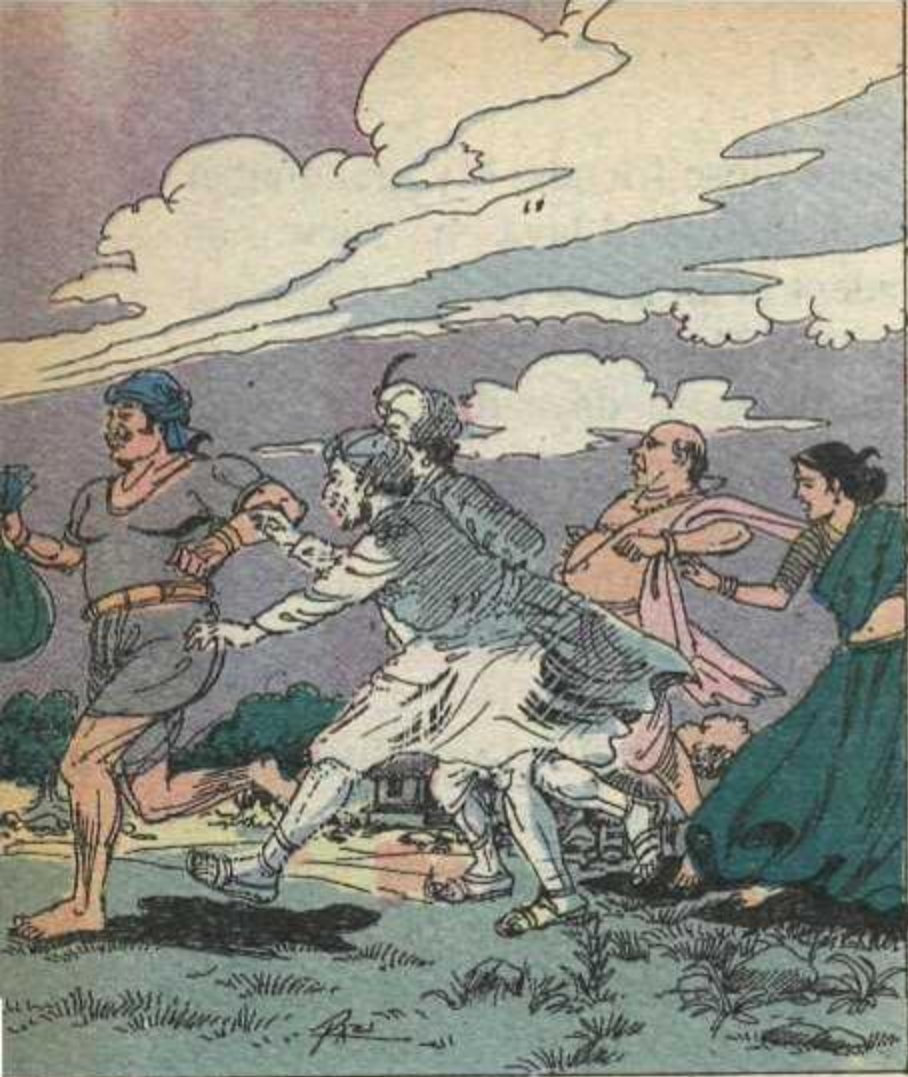
"Anyway, you've saved me by accepting his challenge, Keertisena," said her father. "I think it's only proper that you're aware of some other facts. Listen to me carefully."

With such an introduction, Jayasena narrated how he and Sushena became thick friends. "Just as we're friends, our ancestors, too,

were close friends. My grandfather was also called Jayasena. He was an adept in all kinds of arts, including magic. There was no better expert in magic those days than my grandfather.

"The ruler of Kosala at that time was Sushena's grandfather, Vichitravarma. He, too, was very much interested in magic, mesmerism, and other allied arts. Such common interest brought them closer and, in course of time, my grandfather became a confidante of the king, who made him his advisor. When he saw that the king was well-versed in the same arts that he himself pursued, he was very easily drawn to-





wards Vichitravarma.

"With the help of the magical powers that my grandfather possessed and practised, he and the king travelled the length and breadth of the kingdom to ascertain the problems the subjects faced and to detect thieves and robbers and check crimes. All those who were apprehended were given exemplary punishment. On the whole, the people of Kosala led a peaceful life.

"Meanwhile, on the king's birthday, Jayasena gave him a gift. It was a pearl necklace which had some unique magical powers. The pearls were interspersed with precious stones. Jayasena consecrated the

necklace with three distinct powers. If anyone were to wear it, he or she would become invisible. The wearer could know whether the person talking to him was speaking the truth or uttering a falsehood. Thirdly, the wearer of the necklace would have the power to detect any treasure deep inside the earth.

"King Vichitravarma was overjoyed on receiving such a wonderful gift. One day, he wore the necklace when he set out with his entourage for the forests on the eastern side for a hunt. Jayasena was indisposed and so was unable to accompany him. He stayed back in the capital.

"The hunt went on all day through. The royal party then pitched their tent in the forest and rested for the night. Except the guards, everybody else went into deep sleep the moment they lay down. They were dead tired. Somehow Vichitravarma could not get a wink of sleep. Not that he was worried or had any fear or was angry. He was excited with joy. He came out of his tent and walked up and down the open space in front. Some soldiers followed him. He stopped suddenly and ordered: 'Dig this place!'

"In a short while, it looked as if the day had dawned, for the soldiers had lit torches to help others dig the place.





They went on digging, while the king fell silent. He was yet to tell them to stop.

"Around noon the next day, a granite idol surfaced. It had a glittering nosescREW on. Vichitravarma looked at the idol for a long while and ordered that it be taken to the capital. His minister Prahlad, however, cautioned him, saying it would be better if they consulted someone who knew about idols and temples and waited for his clearance and assurance be-

fore the idol was removed from the spot.

"King Vichitravarma agreed to his minister's suggestion. He left some soldiers in the forest to guard over the idol and then returned to the capital."

Keertisena listened to the narration by her father without raising a query or seeking an explanation. She was all the while busy connecting the details Jayasena gave her with the challenge thrown by King Sushena.

-To continue

Teacher: Do you like school, Mohan?

Mohan (on his second day in school): Jolly good, miss. If it wasn't for school, we wouldn't get any holidays!





THE RESTLESS EARTH

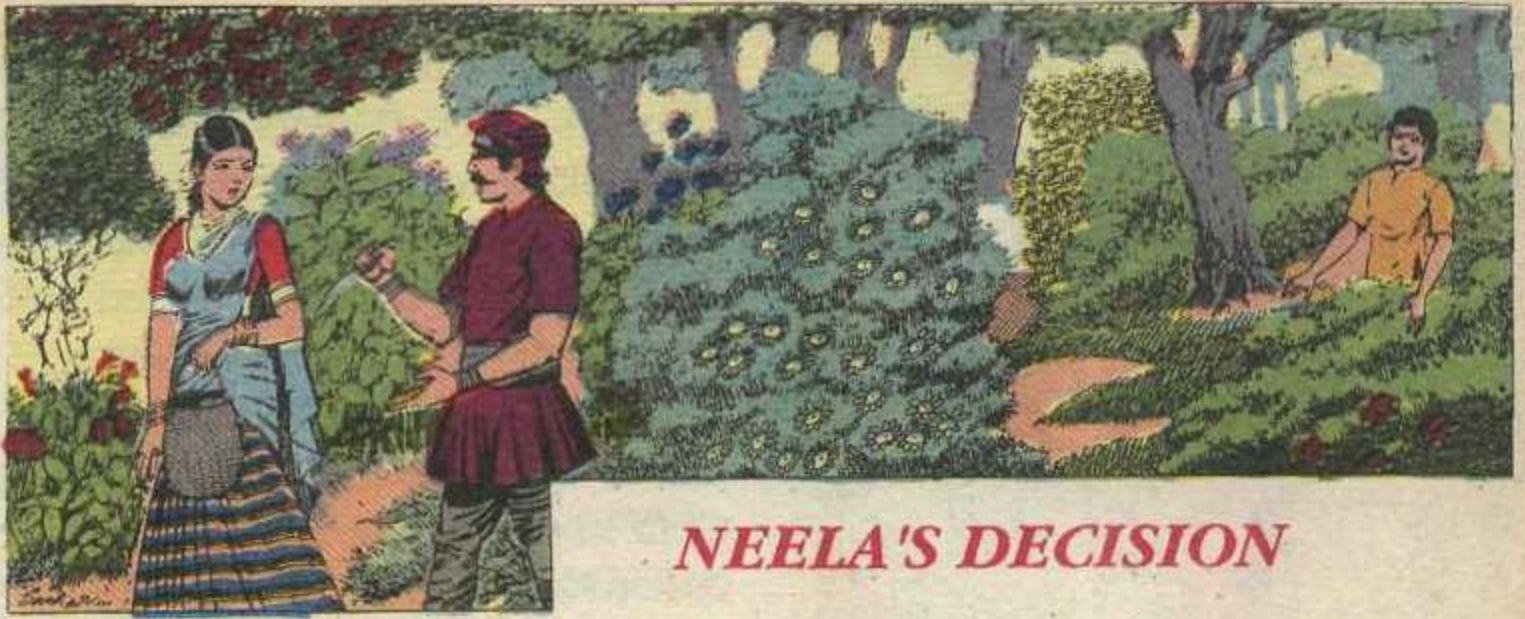
The ancients believed that the great serpent Vasuki, who balanced our earth on his head, sometimes felt restless and shook his head and that caused the earthquakes. We may dismiss this belief as a myth, but in Indian tradition, the serpent symbolises energy. The hidden energy in a human being is described as the Kundalini, a coiled serpent. So, what the ancestors might have meant is the secret energy keeping the balance of the earth.

If sometimes the balance is disturbed for natural reasons beyond man's control causing earthquakes, we at least should be very much careful not to disturb that balance ourselves.

But are we careful enough? Do we know that our activities, industrial or developmental, can provoke earthquakes? Here is a report: "The continuous pumping of contaminated waste fluids from a chemical plant into a 12,000-foot-deep disposal well by the U.S. Army near Denver, Colorado, appeared to be a significant cause of more than 1,000 minor earthquakes that started in 1962 in that area. Even though the practice of pumping poisonous wastes into the well was discontinued in 1966, earthquakes have continued to shake the area, causing concern to residents of Denver, to the Army, and to seismologists.

"Minor earthquakes have been produced by the loading of water in reservoirs. The question was raised concerning the possible cause of the series of earthquakes that shook 41 villages and destroyed homes of 12,000 peasants of central Greece early in 1966 – they might have been caused by the concentration of water in the artificial lake at a power project in Kremasta.

"Also, the Frejus Dam disaster in France, on December 3, 1959, might have been caused by earthquakes triggered by the weight of water behind the dam. No one has yet calculated the potential effects of enormous quantities of water accumulating behind the Aswan Dam of the United Arab Republic." (Barbara Tuft)



NEELA'S DECISION

Manohar was one day passing by a public garden. He heard the cries of a woman. He rushed, only to find a young woman being threatened by a robber who was demanding her ornaments. He held a dagger in his hand. With lightning speed, he knocked the dagger off his hand and pounced on the robber, who was taken unawares. He wriggled out of the youth's clutches and took to his heels.

"Who are you?" asked Manohar of the young woman. "Why do you go about alone? Don't you know, robbers and dacoits are freely roaming the streets?"

The woman looked at him with gratitude. "I'm beholden to you for saving me," she said. "I shall remain ever grateful to you. I'm Neela. My father is engaged in making perfume. I come here to gather flowers for him. That's my daily duty. I also go to the

market with the scent bottles and sell them for him. That's how we earn our livelihood. Now, you haven't told me your name!"

Manohar took pity on the girl. He mentioned his name and added: "I live in a nearby village. My father wants me to take up carpentry. I know quite a few other trades, so I go places in search of work. That's how I take care of my father. He is, however, keen that I stayed back home doing carpentry. But I like to wander and take up odd jobs that come my way."

"I can't afford to leave my father," said Neela. "He depends on the sale of scent bottles which I have to take to the market. He's worried about my marriage. He wants to marry me off as quick as possible."

"May I say something, if you won't misunderstand me?" said Manohar.

"No. Please feel free to tell me,"



Neela assured him.

"If so, you may ask him not to worry about your marriage any more," said Manohar.

"How?" Neela asked him, innocently.

"I'm ready to marry you, Neela!" said Manohar. "That is, if you've no objection."

"You may be keen on marrying me, but I'm not," remarked Neela. "It's true that you saved my life, and I'm indeed grateful to you for that. But that does not mean that I would marry you." She then ran away from his presence.

Manohar was not disappointed. Every day he waited for her in the

garden, and when she came he would help her pluck flowers, spend some time talking to her, and send her away with gifts. She accepted his help and gifts with gratitude but avoided mentioning anything about her marriage.

Manohar and Neela were not aware that an old woman had been watching them in the garden. One day, she accosted Neela and asked her, "Why don't you both get married?" Neela told her that she did not like to marry him.

Another day, the old woman stopped Manohar on his way. "You haven't been able to get her round to marry you. Then, why should you come all the way from your village to meet her? It's better you do something to earn her affection."

Manohar thought the old woman had given him some practical advice. He should do something which would make Neela change her attitude towards him and shower her affection on him. One day, he met with an accident. He slipped down from a tree while plucking flowers which he could not reach from the ground. He had bruises all over, besides an injury on his head. He lay unconscious.

Neela ran home and brought a *vaid* with her. He nursed Manohar's wounds and soon he was able to walk. "Suppose instead of you, I had fallen from the



tree?" said Neela. "That would have been the end to all my problems!" she added with a sigh.

While Neela was on her way back, the old woman met her again. "That young man is handsome and brave. He once saved you from a robber. See how he didn't mind getting injured for your sake! Don't you think he's sincere in his love for you? Why don't you marry him?"

"Amma, I know your concern for him," replied Neela. "But look at my predicament. My father is wholly dependent on me, and I've to toil for him. On the other hand, Manohar does not help his father and wanders from place to place. How can I marry such an irresponsible person?"

The old woman thought for a while and then said, "Your father is making you toil so that he'll have enough money to conduct your wedding. Suppose you had remained at home, would you have earned anything? So, it's only for your good that your father is making you work."

"I quite agree, Amma," Neela responded to the old woman's advice. "But how's all that relevant to my marrying Manohar? If we marry, we both would be in difficulties."

The old woman conveyed her conversation with Neela to Manohar. He



was cross with Neela. So, when he met her next, he told her, "You seem to have some wrong ideas about me, Neela. It's not correct that I'm neglecting my father. If you've any doubt, why don't you go to him and find out for yourself?"

"I shall do so, Manohar," replied Neela. "I shall go to him along with Amma and find out everything about you." That day, she and the old woman proceeded to Manohar's village. They were surprised when they saw his house. It was a mansion, full of servants. An ageing man received them. "I've brought some scent bottles for sale. Isn't there anybody else here who



might buy perfume from me?" said Neela.

"Yes, there are others who may like to buy perfume," said the old man. "Unfortunately he's not here. I'm referring to my son. He doesn't like to remain here and do any work. Instead, he loves to roam about!"

The old woman butted in. "Surely, you're a very rich person; so why should your son go about searching for a job?"

"You're not very wrong, Amma," confessed the old man. "That's what had happened to me. I, too, led a care-free life and soon spent all that my ancestors had left for me. I had to live in a hut; I struggled for several years. I

was unable to treat my wife and she died of ill-health. I became bed-ridden. It's my son who went about and earned an income, and built this house for us in five years. He has ensured that I've all the comforts that I once enjoyed."

"Is that so?" the old woman was surprised. "But whenever we see him, he's clad in simple clothes."

The old man gave a hearty laugh. "If he were to lead a luxurious life like I had led once, then in no time he'll lose all that he had earned. That's why he himself leads a simple life. He insists on earning more and he'll have to work hard for some more time."

Neela showed him the scent bottles. "You're lucky he's not here; he wouldn't have allowed me to buy any of these," said Manohar's father. He paid her for the perfume and sent them away.

"Now, what do you say, Neela?" asked the old woman on their way back. "You've known the truth about Manohar!"

Neela was silent. The next day when she met Manohar she said, "I called on your father yesterday."

Manohar smiled. "I had also called on your father! He asked me a lot of questions. Why, he even promised to teach me how to make perfume! He said he would meet my father and



settle our marriage."

"But how're you so sure that I'll agree to our marriage?" asked Neela.

"I know my father well," replied Manohar. "He would always praise me to whomever he met. I'm sure you were impressed with me from all that he told you. That's why I asked you to go and meet him and find out the truth form

him."

Neela had realised how much Manohar cared for his father and to what extent he would go to make the old man happy and contended.

Their marriage took place soon afterwards. They both insisted on a simple ceremony. They were hailed as an ideal couple.

He plays with dates

Father Balasubramaniam, an engineer, was furious with his 5-year-old son. Viswanathan was making silly mistakes in mathematics. It was a shame, thought his mother, Sulochana, a Maths graduate and a gold medallist, to boot. The father cursed the day he put the boy to school. Viswanathan remembered the date! Also the date when his first set of books were bought! The parents thought, it was uncanny on the part of the lad to have remembered the dates. They tested him and found that he could remember the days, sometimes even the dates, and months for a period stretching 10 years either way. Now Viswanathan can "go back or forward" for two hundred years! He remembers the dates of birth of film stars, Chief Ministers, and all sorts of well-known people and will also tell you on what dates he collected such information and from which source! Viswanathan is now 15 and a student of CSDAV School in Kodambakkam, Madras. You will find him, no not in the playground, but sitting in a corner and scribbling in a book. What does he scribble? You try (may not succeed!) to take a peep; you won't understand a thing! The parents have now re-written their opinion about him. "Hats off to his amazing memory!" they would say.



An offer turned down

Elangovan heard that a shop in Kancheepuram had a vacancy of an accounts-keeper. He called on the owner, Lokanathan, who put him to a test. He spread his fingers on the right hand and asked, "Which finger is the biggest of all?"

"The middle finger," answered Elangovan.

"Wrong!" Lokanathan remarked. "All fingers have the same age. All right, which is the smallest finger?" he asked, spreading the fingers on the other hand.

"There's nothing small among them," answered Elangovan.

"You're wrong once again," remarked Lokanathan. "The index finger is the smallest of all. From the way you've answered two simple questions, do you expect me to employ you?"

"No. I'm sure I won't get the job," said Elangovan.

"You're again wrong. I shall employ you; you may come for work from tomorrow," said Lokanathan.

"I'm afraid I can't accept your offer," said Elangovan. "You don't have any common sense. If I work for you, I shall only go mad!" He then walked out of the shop.



Chandamama Supplement – 67

COMMON TREES OF INDIA

Tree of Knowledge

Prince Siddhartha is believed to have sat under a *Bodhi* tree in meditation for several days together and received enlightenment. As one who became enlightened under the 'tree of knowledge', he came to be called the Buddha. The place where the tree stood was known as Bodhi Gaya. The Kalinga king, Asoka, after taking to Buddhism, sent his daughter, Sanghamitra, to Lanka (now Sri Lanka) to spread the religion. She carried a sapling and planted it in Anuradhapura about 288 B.C. This tree is still alive – even after more than 2,200 years.

The more common name of this tree is *Peepal*, which is also known as *Asvatham* in Tamil and Malayalam. The Latin name, *Ficus religiosa* Linn., indicates how people venerate it. More than anywhere else, it is grown in the precincts of temples and in front of houses if they have a large compound. Anyone who plants a *peepal* is supposed to be blessed for generations to come. Though its roots spread wide and may cause damage to other trees, the *peepal* is never cut – not even the branches.

The leaves are leathery, smooth, and shining. The base is heart-shaped, and narrows at the tip into a long pointed tail. The leaves generally hang down and, therefore, even a slight breeze can set them quivering. The figs are a favourite of birds, who leave the seeds everywhere; they can germinate on old walls and precipitous rocks.





TRIPITAKA

The Buddha's birthday as well as the day he got enlightenment and the day he left his body, are all believed to have taken place on the same day of the Hindu calendar, the day followed by the full moon night, later known as the *Buddha Purnima*. The day falls this month.

According to the Buddha (566 to 486 B.C.), life is full of suffering and that is why the wise should seek Nirvana which means a complete extinction of life; no more birth and no more death. His teachings on how one can give up all desires and thereby free oneself from Karma and achieve Nirvana were not written down by himself. Even his direct disciples did not write them down. But they were remembered by scholarly Buddhists. More than two hundred years after the Buddha's death, trusted scholars met in a conference called by Emperor Asoka and they wrote down the teachings.

The teachings were compiled in three parts and that is why the book is known as the *Tripitaka* or three baskets. They are (i) *Vinaya Pitaka*, containing rules which should govern the life of a spiritual community, (ii) *Sutta Pitaka*, and (iii) *Abhidhamma Pitaka* explaining how to live an ideal life with Nirvana as the goal.

Sutta Pitaka is the most important of the three, and 423 maxims culled from this part form a book famous as the *Dhammapada*.

The *Tripitaka* is written in Pali, once a popular language but now studied only by some scholars. The maxims are very lyrical, yet profound. Here are a few samples:

"Hatred can never be ended by hatred, by none—hatred alone can hatred be ended."

"Fragrance of flowers cannot be carried against the wind; but the

fragrance (influence) of an honest man prevails against odds and spreads in all directions."

While the *Tripitaka* is the main book so far as the Buddhist ideology is concerned, the other book which is very important is known as the *Jatakas*. That is a compilation of stories with moral lessons. In most of the stories, the chief character is Bodhisattva or the spirit of the Buddha which had been born again and again earlier, sometimes even taking an animal body. Every time he got some new experience. That helped him learn more and more about the condition of life on earth. Many a time he also set examples in sacrifice and nobility.



DO YOU KNOW?

1. Who founded the Jewish nation?
2. Who founded the Red Cross Movement?
3. How did the South American country, Bolivia, get its name?
4. The successors of Prophet Mohammed were known as *Caliphs*.
Who was the first Caliph?
5. Which tree yields quinine that has medicinal properties?
6. Which invader first introduced cannons in India?
7. A well-known French philosopher refused to accept the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1964. Who?
8. Who first conceived the theory that the earth is round?
9. It was a Greek philosopher who first stated that the moon does not shine by itself but has a reflected light. Name him.
10. Which is the largest African country?
11. Name the two main sects of the Buddhist religion?
12. An American President held office for only one month. Who?
13. The capital of a nation in Europe is situated on twenty islands. Name the nation and capital.
14. Who developed the printing press in the 15th century?
15. Which emperor gave a written Constitution to Japan?
16. Who was the world's first woman Prime Minister?

Answers:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Abraham | 9. Anaxagoras |
| 2. Henri Dumas | 8. Pythagoras |
| 3. The name takes after Simon Bolivar who freed the country from Spain in 1825. | 7. Jean Paul Sartre |
| 4. Abu Baker | 6. Babur |
| 5. Cinchona | 5. Johann Gutenberg |
| 6. Babur | 4. Sweden - Stockholm |
| 7. Jean Paul Sartre | 3. President, who died a month after he assumed office. |
| 8. Pythagoras | 12. William Henry Harrison, the 9th |
| 9. Anaxagoras | 11. Hinayana, Mahayana |
| | 10. Sudan |
| | 16. Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka |
| | 15. Emperor Meiji |
| | 14. Johann Gutenberg |



THE FOURTH ROBBER



Long ago, there lived a king. He was a righteous man and was always concerned about the welfare and happiness of his subjects. Often he wandered in disguise to see how the people of his realm lived.

One day, while he was thus wandering in the guise of a traveller, he went far to the edge of the forest. The sun had already set and he was caught up in a storm. Suddenly, he saw a dim light flickering in the darkness. He followed it and came to a humble dwelling. He knocked on the heavy wooden door. "May I find my shelter

here, for this is a rainy night?" he asked.

"Enter, O traveller, you're welcome! A guest is indeed a gift of God!" came the answer in a chorus.

The king found three men sitting around a fire and sipping tea. They offered him some and continued their discussion. Their visitor found it rather interesting and finally enquired, "Tell me, my good men, how do you earn your living? What's your trade?"

"I can understand the language of animals," replied the first.

"Ah! That's an extraordinary ca





capacity!" exclaimed the guest. "What about you?" he asked the other man.

"Whether it be day or night, once I set my eyes upon anything, I can never forget it," answered the second.

"I know the art to open any lock or door," replied the last.

"Oh! You all have been gifted with unusual qualities! Indeed, I'm proud to have met you! But my good friends, will you please tell me how you use your talents?" asked the visitor.

"Well, just before you came, we were in fact chalking out a plan to burgle the royal treasury," said the first man, with an air of innocence.

"But," added the second, "we trust

you as a friend; surely, you're not going to betray us to anyone!"

"You haven't told us about yourself. What's *your* trade? How do you make *your* living?" asked the third stranger with curiosity.

The king pondered awhile and then caressing his long bushy whiskers, said, "When I lift the right end of my moustache, I build! When I turn the left end downwards, I destroy!"

"That's an interesting trade, indeed!" exclaimed the three strangers without caring to know further. For the rain had by then subsided and it was time for them to set out on their mission.

They invited their guest to join them in their nocturnal adventure. He gladly did so. So, the four set off.

As they approached the royal treasury, a dog began to bark, and another joined in.

"Why are the dogs barking?" asked the two friends turning to the one versed in the language of animals.

He answered, "Well, the first dog said, 'Look, a gang of robbers are coming'. The other replied, 'Don't bother, the Master is with them'."

"How foolish the second dog is, to say so!" commented the other two robbers, laughing.

The second man led them through



secret pathways in the darkness, right upto the door of the treasury. Then the third opened half a dozen doors and a score of locks. At last, in the candlelight there shone before them the royal riches.

They filled their sacks to their utmost capacity. The king watched his wealth being stolen before his very eyes, but restrained himself from shouting, with great difficulty.

Then the three friends and their guest came out, shutting all the doors behind them. No one noticed their movements, not even the well-trained guards of the kingdom. The robbers gave the king a share of their booty. Then they parted, bidding goodbye to their guest who thanked them for their kindness and company.

The king returned, of course, to his palace. He was happy that there lived in his realm men with such unusual skill and qualities. But he was sad too, for they did not make the right use of them. He was greatly annoyed with his own guards also, who failed in their duty to keep proper vigil.

The next morning, the king entered his court draped in a deep red apparel. That was a sign for royal displeasure. He summoned all his ministers and chiefs. On seeing their lord thus dressed, a deep fear filled their hearts.



"Bring me the blue diamonds," he ordered his Minister of Treasury.

All wondered about the reasons behind the king's sudden need of those precious stones. The minister and his men at once set forth to do the royal summon. They entered the treasury. What a disaster! The diamonds had disappeared!

The minister returned to the court with unsteady steps. He fell on his knees and said, "Your Majesty, the diamonds are missing. All the doors and the locks are intact. I know not who could have taken them away!"

"I grant you only five days to find

out the culprits and bring me my diamonds. Failing, you will be beheaded!" said an enraged king.

So, soldiers were sent to all corners of the kingdom who made inquiries everywhere. Alas, no clue was found to the mystery of the missing diamonds.

On the sixth day, the minister was thrown into prison and the king sent his guards to the hut of the three friends. Soon they were brought to his presence.

"What do you do for a living?" he asked them.

The three men just stood in silence, heads hung!

"Look here," shouted the king, pretending to be furious, "you've been charged of breaking into the royal treasury!"

He then turned his left moustache downwards. "Executioner, unsheath your sword! Let these men pay with their life for their crime!"

That very instant the second accomplice opened his mouth. "Long live the king! Long live our royal guest!" he said and his two friends echoed him.

The king nodded and understood that he had been recognised by the man who never forgot once he had seen a thing, even in the dark.


"Pardon us, O Lord," they pleaded for mercy.

The king lifted his right moustache and revoked his decree. The robbers fell at his feet. They offered to use their talents for the welfare of the kingdom. The king enrolled them in his police-force. Thereafter it became so easy for him to detect and put down crimes.

Often the three friends would gratefully remember, "How right was our king! Just by a mere twitch of his moustache he created new men out of us!"

— Retold by Anup Kishore Das



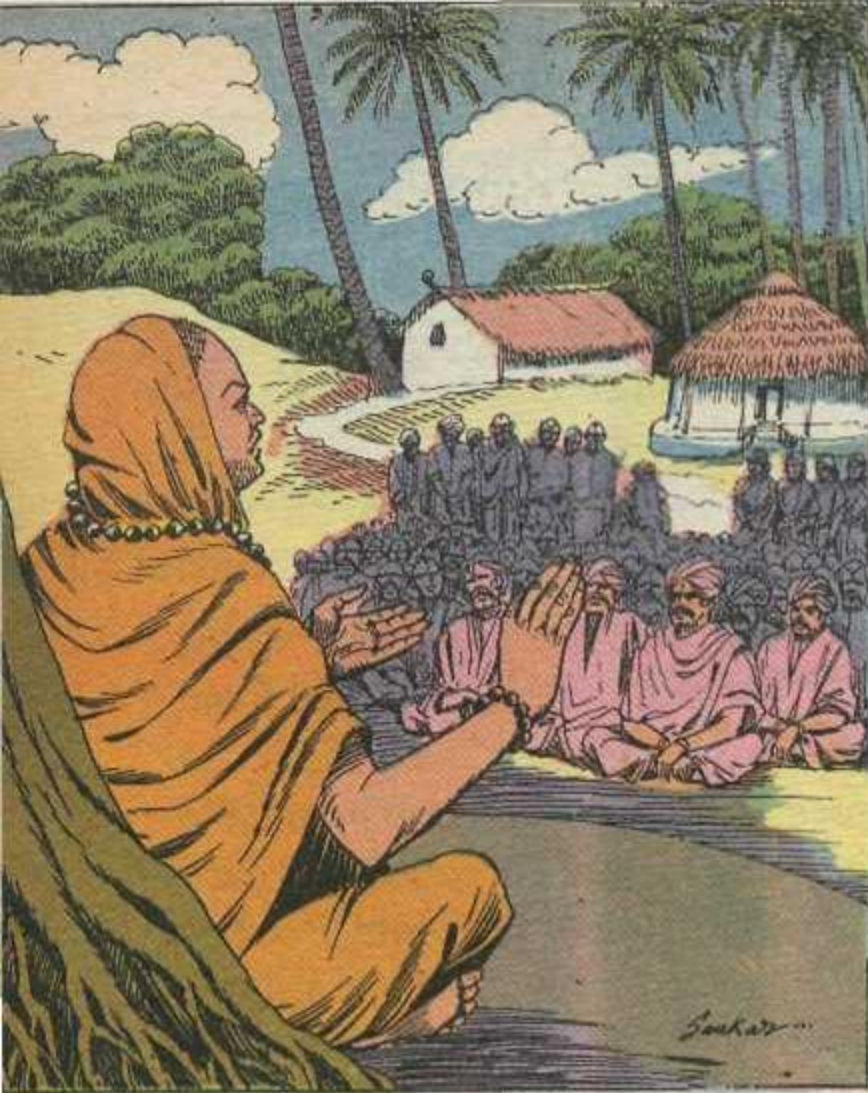


New Tales of King Vikram and the Vampire

Trait or test?

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. Why are you so adamant? I don't know whether you're doing all this at someone's instance. If so, you would better think twice about it, because that person ultimately may turn his



back on you. That's what happened to Bilwanath." The vampire then narrated a story to Vikramaditya.

Bilwanath was a rich farmer of Bilaspur. He would not go to the help of anyone except to offer advice. "It's a sin to hurt anyone; it's so even if you were to help him." He was often heard to explain his motto in life. "Everyone should try to stand on his own feet and not depend on others, only then would the world progress," he would add, if he got a chance. The people of Bilaspur accepted his advice and believed that it would be a sin if they helped another person. Before long, the vil-

lagers forgot the meaning of the word 'help'.

One day, a wise man arrived in Bilaspur. People flocked to listen to him. "People should be willing to help others. It will be your service to others which will be counted to your credit after your death. The very existence of the universe depends on mutual help and cooperation." People who had forgotten what help meant now woke up and came forward to oblige each other.

A young man of Bilaspur named Veer Bahadur had lost his parents when he was a little boy. They met with sudden end when their house collapsed. The boy was also injured on the legs, and he was unable to undertake any work and eke out a living. He was, therefore, forced to seek alms. A distant relation of his, Dharmapal, wished to take the boy home and take care of him. He went to Bilwanath for advice.

"If you take him home and feed him, he'll only turn a lazy fellow," said Bilwanath. "He may not be able to walk because of the injuries, but he has hands and can work and earn a livelihood. You bring him to me; let me give him some advice."

Dharmapal thought Bilwanath was right. Veer Bahadur must try to



do some work. He took him to Bilwanath, who asked him to learn basket-weaving. In fact, he even bought cane and other material to help the youth start on the trade. Veer Bahadur soon learnt how to weave baskets and mats. He was fast in his work and he could soon take the baskets and mats that he made to the market and sell them at a profit. Slowly his earnings increased. However, he did not benefit much from his effort because whatever he brought was pocketed by Bilwanath. In return, he gave him food twice.

After a few days, Bilwanath's wife protested. "How long can we feed him like this?" she asked her

husband. "Let's send him away. He can go and stay somewhere else."

"You're a fool!" Bilwanath rebuked his wife. "Have you any idea how much money we're earning from the baskets and mats he makes? We spend very little on him, compared to what he earns for us. We stand to lose all that if we were to send him away." The woman kept quiet after that.

A gentleman called Sivaram wished to build a temple for Siva in Bilaspur. He went to Bilwanath for advice. "There's already a temple here," Bilwanath reminded him, "and I'm its trustee. It's in a dilapidated state and needs a lot of repairs. Let's





attend to that, instead of building a new temple. After all there's only one God. You give me the money you have set apart for temple-building. I shall use it and renovate our temple."

"What you say is right," said Sivaram, "All gods are the same. We must realise this and propagate the idea. Yes, let's renovate the temple in your care." He then handed over the money to Bilwanath, who thought he should also collect donations from the villagers. Work on renovating the temple started in right earnest. At the same time Bilwanath was able to save some money for

himself.

Another gentleman called Senapati came forward to serve noon meal to the children in schools in Bilaspur. Bilwanath came to know about this proposal. He called Senapati and told him, "Don't you know that the school is surrounded by open grounds? The land should be put to use by growing rice and vegetables. And they can be cooked and served to the children. You would better give over to me whatever money you have earmarked for your noon-meal scheme."

Senapati was convinced of Bilwanath's argument. He gave him the money he had carried with him. Bilwanath bought seeds and seedlings to plant on the land which was got ready for the purpose. Rice grew in plenty; there were enough and more vegetables to be served to the children. However, Bilwanath did not forget to make money for himself from this noon-meal scheme. He grew richer and richer day by day. The villagers became mere puppets in his hands.

One day, Pasupatinath from Paschimpuri came to Bilaspur. He met some prominent people there and announced:

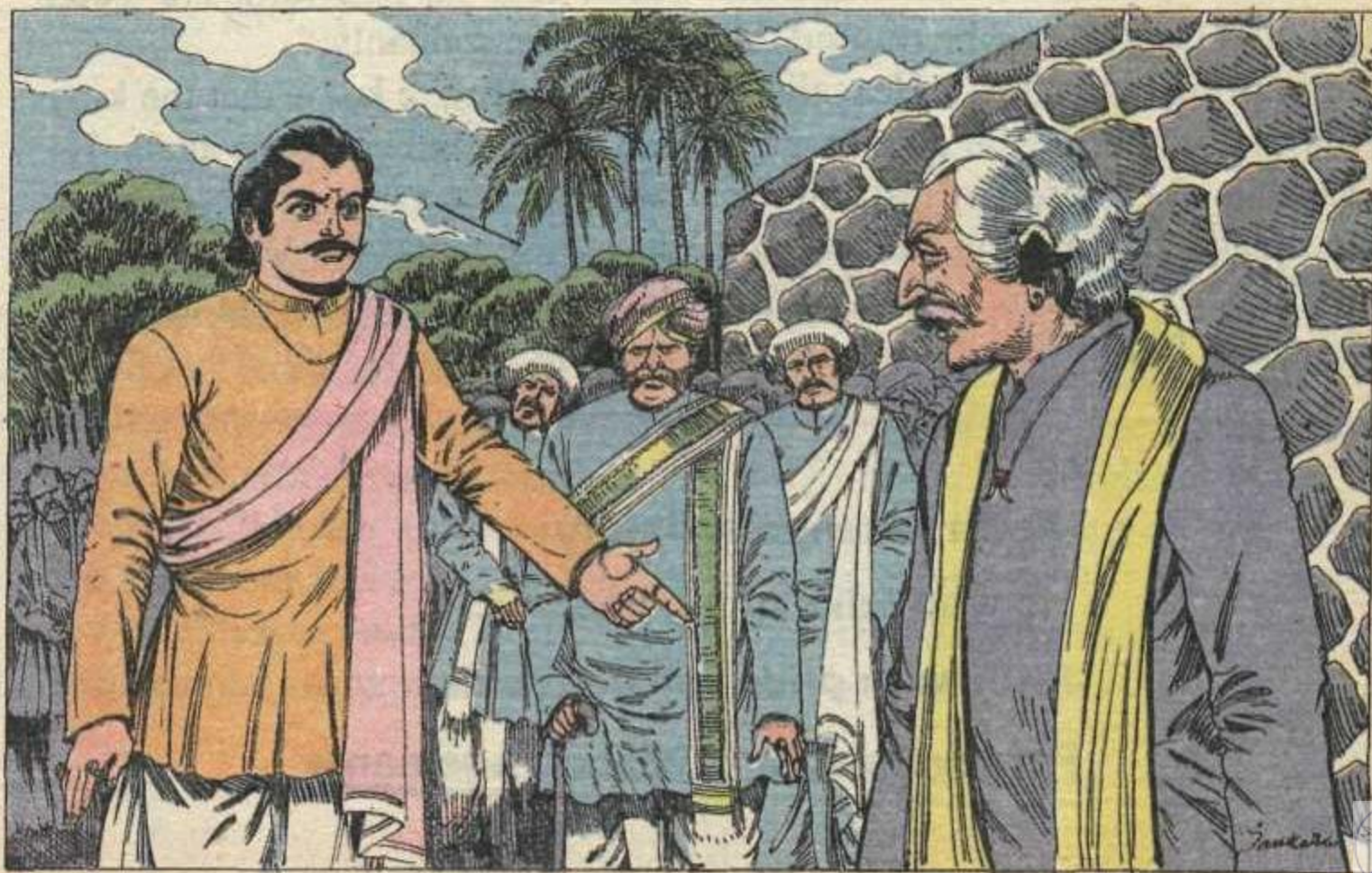
"I wish to donate some money to

the poor people here. I have been doing this in other villages, too. This is my service to poor people. Could you help me in locating some poor people deserving of my help? I shall buy land for them so that they can convert them into farms."

The village leaders hastened to Bilwanath. He scoffed at the very idea of improving the condition of the poor people in Bilaspur. "But we don't have any poor people in Bilaspur!" remarked Bilwanath, spreading both hands. "Everybody here is having some work or other and earning, too. Tell Pasupati that he should not waste his money. Let him remit it into the state treasury."

Pasupatinath was attracted by the suggestion. He went to Bilwanath and handed the money to him. But Bilwanath refused to accept it. "No, I won't take the money. How do I know from where you got the money or how you earned it? And I'm not in the habit of taking donations from anybody."

The vampire ended his narration. Turning to King Vitramaditya, he asked him: "O King! Bilwanath had no hesitation to take money under the pretext of temple renovation, noon-meal scheme, and other projects. And he pocketed a large chunk of all this for himself. But when Pasupatinath offered him a





big sum, he was reluctant to accept it. Why? Did he become wise suddenly? Was he taken over by good thoughts? If you know the answers and still keep silent, beware, your head will be blown to pieces!"

Vikramaditya did not have to think for long to find the answers. "Bilwanath did not become an honest man just because he refused the offer from Pasupatinath. He realised that he would not be able to gain anything for himself by distributing Pasupatinath's money. He was not willing to involve himself with anything from which he would not

get any returns. At the same time he would not want others to do any good deed. He was a hindrance to anything that the people benefited from. He asked Pasupatinath to remit the money into the treasury to prevent it from being used for the welfare of the people. That does not mean that he had turned a good samaritan suddenly."

The vampire knew that the king had outsmarted him once again. He flew back to the ancient tree, carrying the corpse with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.

Never revenge an injury

He who talks much lies much

Pride with pride will not abide

Persevere against discouragements



VEER HANUMAN

(44)

(After asking Bhadra to follow him, Hanuman takes off for Ayodhya. From what he heard from Bhadra, he guesses why Rama has sent for him. Yet, he asks Valmiki whom he meets on the way, "How could all this happen to Rama?" The sage tells him that ruling a country is no bed of roses. At Ayodhya, Lava and Kusa ask him to prove that he is really Hanuman. On seeing him, Rama is unable to control his tears. He sends Hanuman to Manipuri.)

The King of Manipuri was Manidhwaja. Not only was he a mighty ruler, he was a great devotee of Lord Siva. To please the Lord, he conducted several *yagas* and held *homams* and worshipped him for days together. Many a time he even cut his head and offered it to the Lord, who then appeared before him and granted him many boons.

When devotees pray to the almighty, the Lord has to oblige them and grant whatever they wish or ask for. This has been the custom from the days man realised the existence of God, who could be pleased by devotion arising from the deep heart. And the almighty does not discriminate between His devotees—be they rich or poor.

ENCOUNTER WITH MANIDHWAJA





Manidhwaja had proved his devotion to the Lord, and Siva went on granting him all that he asked for. In fact, the Lord even offered him His own trident and the powerful Pasupata arrow whenever Manidhwaja wanted them or such a necessity arose. The Lord had also agreed to go to his aid if Manidhwaja were to seek his help. All this made Manidhwaja a mighty king and arrogant. No one dared challenge his might or raise a voice in protest. Manidhwaja ordered that the kingdom would have only temples dedicated to Siva. He sent out of the kingdom anyone who worshipped a

god other than Lord Siva.

Several of his subjects fled the kingdom to escape his wrath. They took refuge in Ayodhya, and complained to Rama about the atrocities of King Manidhwaja. He assured them that Manidhwaja's days were numbered and they would be able to return to Manipuri. He saw to it that all had a comfortable stay as long as they remained in Ayodhya.

The *Aswamedha* yaga horse wandered to several kingdoms and none challenged its passage, except when it entered Manipuri. Manidhwaja had it tied in his stable for horses.

Lakshmana, who was following the horse, sent a messenger asking Manidhwaja to free the horse and accept the overlordship of Rama. The cruel Manidhwaja insulted the messenger and sent him back after scalding his back with a trident mark. "Go and tell Rama, who had killed devotees of Siva, like Ravana, that he will be sacrificed on one of the Siva *lingas* here! Anybody who trespasses into my kingdom will be given such marks from a hot trident. Nobody on the earth will be able to overpower me!" Manidhwaja dropped a basketful of holy ash on the head of the messenger sent by



Lakshmana.

When the messenger went back and reported the matter to Lakshmana, he consulted Bharata and Shatrughna, and came to the conclusion that they might have to wage a war with Manidhwaja. Bharata attacked the arrogant king from one side, while Shatrughna engaged him in an encounter from another side. Lakshmana met him face to face.

When Manidhwaja realised that he would not be able to meet the combined attack by the three brothers, he prayed to Siva and asked for the Lord's trident. The next moment it was in his hands. He aimed it at Lakshmana who was approach-

ing him like an angry, hissing serpent. It was at that very moment Hanuman reached there. He halted the progress of the trident and stood in front of Manidhwaja so that he could see his bared chest.

Manidhwaja thought it was the Lord Himself who was standing in front of him. He bowed. "O devotee of Siva!" Hanuman addressed him. "I'm Hanuman. It is Rama whom I serve. Does it behove a devotee of Siva to indulge in cruelties?" He began thrashing Manidhwaja.

The very face of Hanuman was fearsome. He was now holding the trident. Manidhwaja wished to take revenge on him. So once again he





prayed to Siva. This time, he asked for the Lord's Pasupata arrow. After all, hadn't Manidhwaja propitiated him with his prayers, devotion, and sacrifice? So, the Lord had no other choice except to grant him his wish.

When Manidhwaja strung the powerful arrow to his bow and shot it, the whole place became unbearably hot as if everything was set on fire. Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna fell down unconscious. Hanuman began chanting the name of Siva and prepared himself to receive the arrow on his chest. What was once an arrow was now just a tiny twig. It hit Hanuman but he was

not affected in any way.

Hanuman with his bare hands broke the chariot of Manidhwaja to pieces. He then raised his mace against Manidhwaja, who took to his heels. He rushed to his palace and ran to his *puja* room and went on hitting with his head the Siva *linga* installed there, crying out, "O Lord! O Mahadeva! Please come and save me!"

He thought he heard a voice emanating from the *linga*. "What's this, Manidhwaja? You are arrogantly claiming that you're invincible. And now you're running away from your enemies! You must be brave. Go and face Hanuman. I shall be with you!"

Manidhwaja went back to the battlefield. Lord Siva got on to his mount, Nandi, and went with him. Hanuman knew who was accompanying Manidhwaja. Yet, he did not withdraw. He attacked both Manidhwaja and Siva. Nandi was scared and ran away.

"Aren't you a devotee of Vishnu?" Siva asked of Hanuman.

"Yes, I'm a devotee of Rama, O Lord!" replied Hanuman. "I serve Rama, and he's my god. He's always in my mind and thoughts. There's no single moment when I don't chant



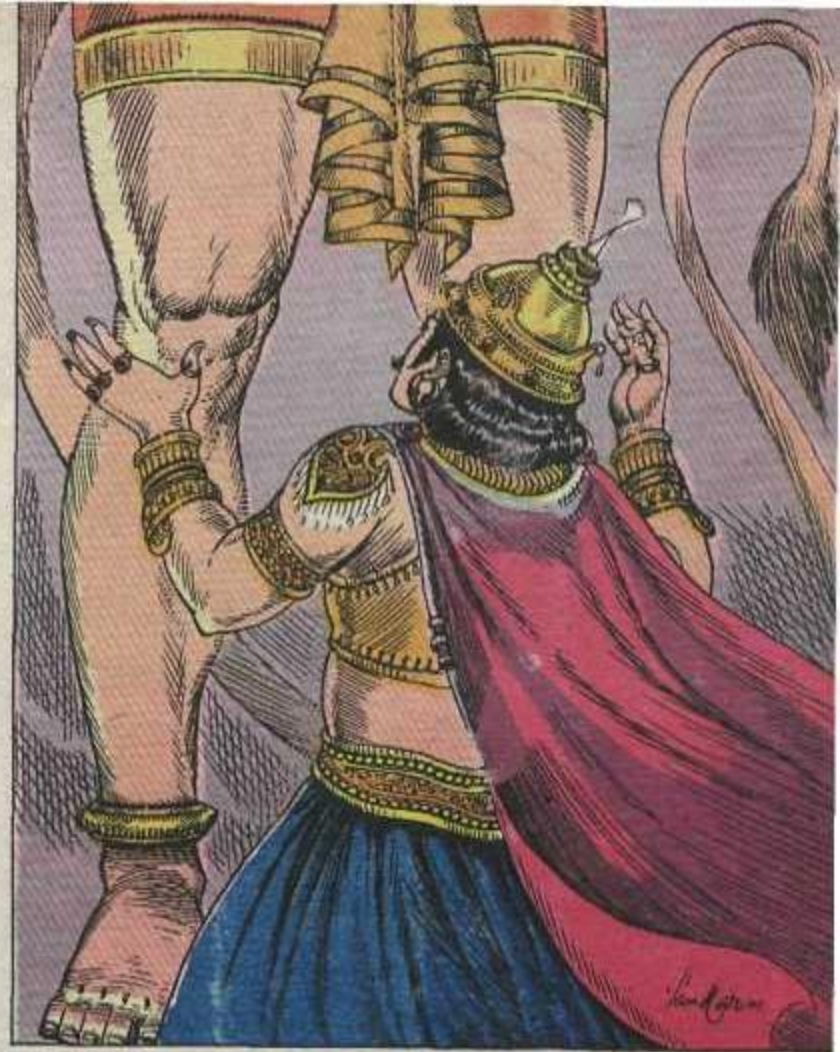
His name. He gives me the wisdom and strength I need. It's his power that saves my life. He's holding the *aswamedha yaga* for the welfare of the people. I can't, therefore, let anyone take captive the *yaga* horse. Manidhwaja, who claims he's a devotee of Siva, perpetrates atrocities and crimes. Would you approve of them? Isn't he challenging everybody, only because he knows you'll be with him? Is it righteous on your part to help such a devotee?"

Hanuman sounded sarcastic as well as angry. Lord Siva was very much aware of this, but he did not reveal his feelings. Smilingly he said, "I'm now going to open my Third eye. If you're smart, you may save yourself."

"Nothing prevents you from doing so, O Lord! said Hanuman calmly. "That may open up the eyes of my ignorance."

From Siva's Third eye emanated flames of fire, which raced towards Hanuman. He extended his right arm, caught hold of the flame, and pushed it into his mouth – all the while chanting "Rama! Rama!" Manidhwaja watched it with bated breath and wonderment.

"Manidhwaja! Did you see that?" said Lord Siva turning to the king."



Hanuman is a part of me. That's how my power could merge with him. If you want to know what true devotion is, you should learn it from him." The Lord then disappeared.

Hanuman flew to Dronagiri mountain and brought Sanjeevini. He crushed the plant and applied it on Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna who were still lying unconscious by the heat that came out of the Pasupata arrow. The three brothers soon regained consciousness and stood up.

Manidhwaja's eyes were now opened. He realised the folly of his conceit and the cruelty in all his



misdeeds. He was now full of remorse. He knew the power of devotion in Hanuman. He bowed and paid his respect to Hanuman. "Did you realise how your devotion to the Lord went useless by your arrogance, Manidhwaja?" Hanuman rebuked him. "You amassed boons by subjecting yourself to pain and strain. But you utilised all the boons for your own benefit. You made the Lord a mere servant of yours. God has created human beings and nature to live peacefully and not to quarrel with each other. We must make an example of our lives to show how happily we can live. You've realised

your mistakes and follies. Henceforth you should give up pride and arrogance and think of the welfare of your people. All gods are one and the same."

"O wise one! You've really opened my eyes!" said Manidhwaja in all humility. "I now know why Lord Siva had so quickly granted the boons the moment I wished for them. He wanted to teach me a lesson, and this lesson has come from the *yaga* and the horse. I now wish to meet Rama and seek his forgiveness. I shall ask him to accept me as one among the millions of devotees he has."

Manidhwaja released the Aswamedha horse. It wandered to more kingdoms before it returned to Ayodhya. Manidhwaja, accompanied by his daughters, Shobha and Shubha, went to Ayodhya and sought Rama's pardon.

Rama treated him like a friend. Everybody praised Rama for not keeping any rancour towards Manidhwaja. He expressed his desire that his daughters should be married to Lava and Kusa. Rama agreed to his wish, and said the wedding would take place on conclusion of the *aswamedha yaga*.

Manidhwaja also asked for for-





Santhar



givenness from his subjects who had run away from Manipuri and taken refuge in Ayodhya. They all now went back to Manipuri.

The *aswamedha yaga* was now reaching its concluding days. Sugriva and his army arrived in Ayodhya. They were followed by Vibhishana from Lanka, accompanied by his ministers. The rulers of other kingdoms also trooped in one after another.

The royal treasury of Ayodhya overflowed with the gold, silver, and precious stones brought by the rulers as their offering in recognition of Rama's suzerainty over them. Ayodhya was agog with festivities. At night it glittered like paradise.

Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna who had followed the *yaga* horse were now back in Ayodhya,

supervising the arrangements for the conclusion of the rituals. Sages like Bharadwaj, Gautama, Adri, and Angasatya were already in Ayodhya and had taken their position. The *yaga* concluded in all glory. Sri Rama was the happiest of all. He arranged for large-scale charities. Womenfolk were presented with ornaments. Whoever had helped in the performance of the *yaga* were given gifts and mementoes. The people of Ayodhya jumped for joy.

Manidhwaja extended an invitation to everybody to go over to his kingdom. He led them in a grand procession. He performed the wedding of his daughters and handed his kingdom to Lava and Kusa. He then left for the mountains to do *tapas*.

— To conclude



THE WORLD OF NATURE

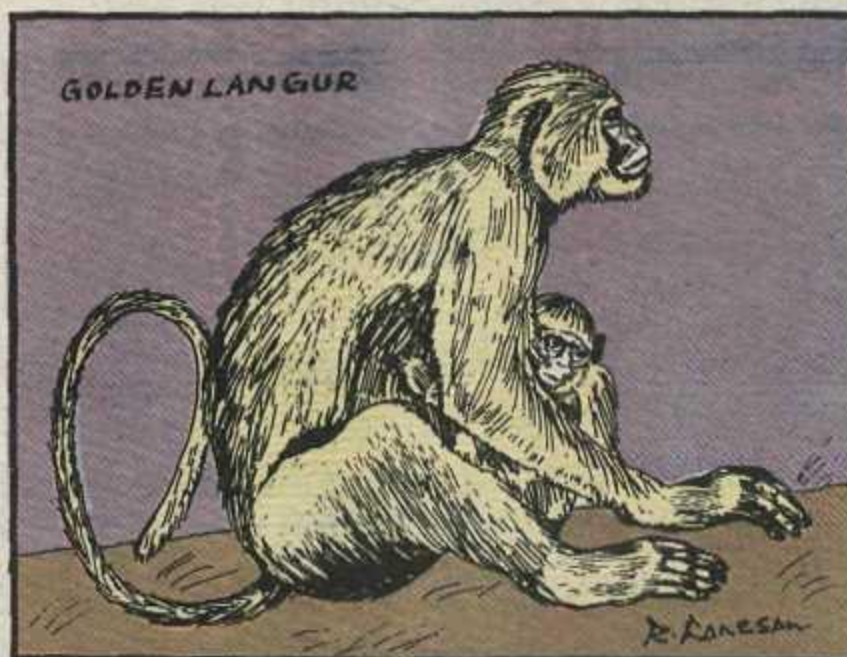
A rare parrot

Among talking parrots, the "Hiraman Tota" is a rare species. They are famous for their sweet tongue and expert imitation of the human voice. A legend says that when the Mughal emperor, Humayun, conquered the fort of Gagrion from Bahadur Shah, among the booty was a parrot in a golden cage. As he was watching it, fascinated, Roomi Khan who had deserted Bahadur Shah came there and the Hiranman cried, "Gaddar, Gaddar!" (traitor). The well-known ornithologist, Dr. Salim Ali, has noted in one of his books that this particular variety is quick at learning the human language. Alas, this species is almost extinct, thanks to the Behedia tribe that lives around the Madhya Pradesh fort and lays traps to catch them whenever they are sighted.



A golden langur, at last!

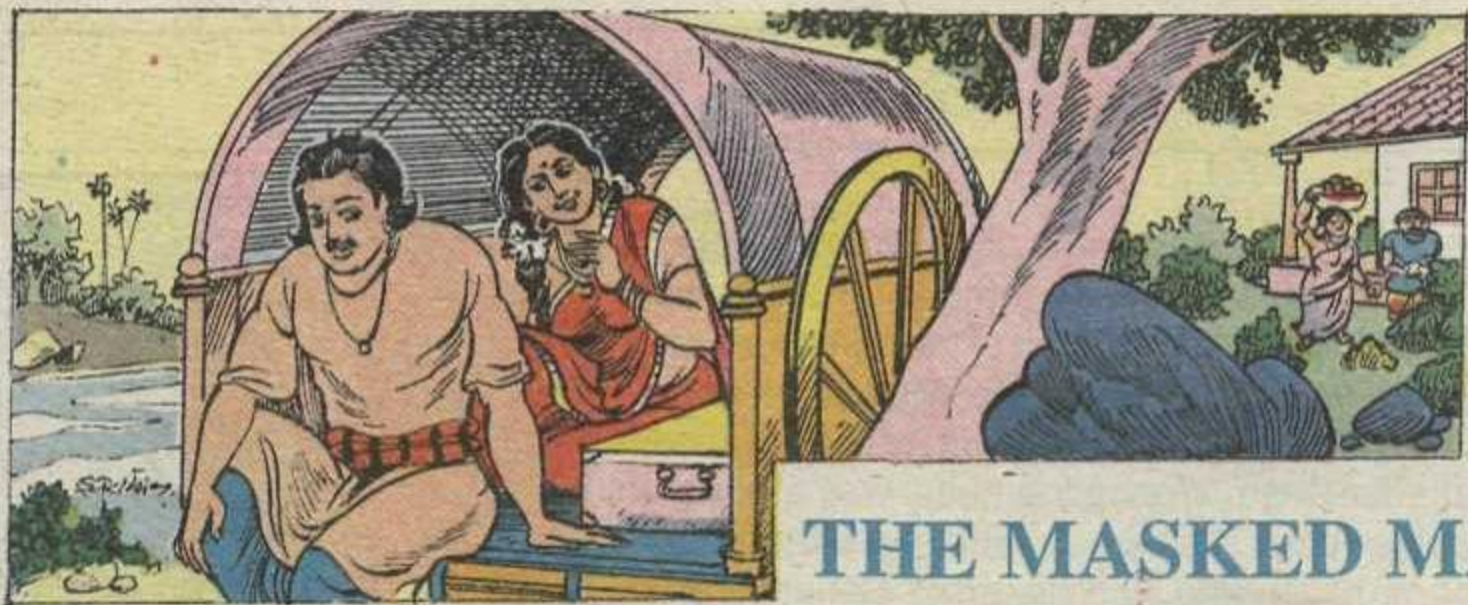
After nearly 20 years, a golden langur was seen in Volka, a village near Jalpaiguri, in West Bengal. The monkey was spotted and rescued by the employees of the Buxa tiger project. This rare species – now existing only in Manas sanctuary in Assam – is on top of our list of endangered animals.



Starved to death

Nearly 75,000 British seabirds are reported to have died of starvation! They failed to catch enough fish, because of excessive fishing by the residents of the eastern shores of the British Isles. About 50,000 of them died in the Shetlands alone. Some of the affected bird-population are Guillemot, shags, razor bills, and puffins.





THE MASKED MAN

Karthikeya of Kedarpur got married, and was taking his bride Manohari home in a cart that he had hired. He stopped the cart by the side of a river and got down. Nearby was an ancient house. Its garden had a lot of vegetables and fruits growing. They could see a couple in the garden plucking the fruits and vegetables. The husband and wife were dwarfs.

Manohari found Karthikeya keenly watching the couple with a smile. When he got into the cart, she asked him inquisitively, "Why were you laughing? Do you know them?"

"Oh! That's a long story," said Karthikeya. "I know them very well." He then told her how he happened to meet them. "About four months ago, I happened to pass this way. The river was in floods at that time. Suddenly it started raining, accompanied by thunder and lightning. I ran to that house

and knocked on the door. A dwarf-sized woman opened the door. 'Who are you? What do you want?' she asked me.

"I replied, 'The river is in spate, and I can't cross it now. May I halt here for the night?'

"And the woman said, 'That will be all right. Where else can you go to-night?'

"By then, a dwarf-sized man joined her, and together they received me and took me inside. They insisted on sharing their food with me. I gladly accepted their hospitality. During our conversation, the woman said worriedly, 'My brother Thambi had promised to come here today, but there's no indication of his arrival yet.' She then kept aside some food for him.

"They asked me to sleep in the front room. I was really surprised. Could there be such good-natured people in

the world? I was about to fall asleep when I heard a knock on the door. 'Who's there?' I asked, as I opened the door. I was taken aback to see a man, wearing a mask. He held a dagger in his hand. By then, the little woman came there. 'Has my brother arrived?' she asked, but in the next moment she cried when she saw the masked face.

"The robber caught hold of the woman and placed the dagger on her throat and threatened me. 'If you come to her help, you'll only see her dead body! He then went about collecting all the valuables he found there. He did not spare me either, and took away my money-bag and rings.

"I was very sorry that my hosts lost much of their property and I blamed myself as I had opened the door for him. If I had not opened the door, he would not have got in and robbed the couple. I apologised to them. But they were not at all angry with me. 'In fact, you saved our lives. He would have killed us if you had offered resistance. After all, we have only lost our property, and not our lives!' They reassured me again and again.

"Next morning, I could cross the river and reach home. When I narrated the incident to my mother, she took pity on them. She thought I should make amends for my role in the inci-



dent and wanted me to go and give them some money. I started for their place with a thousand rupees.

"When I reached there, it was well past dusk. It was pitch dark. As I approached their house, I saw the man in mask at the back door. I hid myself behind a tree to see what he was up to. The little woman opened the door and came out to meet him. She whispered something in his ears and went inside.

"I guessed that he was in their employ and with his help, the couple was robbing their guests. Soon, he moved to the front door and was about to knock. I quickly made my way to him and hit him hard on his face. He fell

down unconscious. I removed his mask and wore it. I also took his dagger and then knocked on the door. 'I'm Thambi, please open the door!'

"It was an old man who opened the door. 'Oh! Thambi? Your sister has been waiting for you,' he said, as he left the door ajar. The moment he saw my mask, he fainted. I knew the old man was their guest that day. They were trying their mischief on him. Meanwhile, the little woman came there. 'Thambi! You've come!'

"I caught hold of the woman and held the dagger against her neck. 'Where's your husband?' I asked her. She stood flabbergasted. I threatened her of dire consequences while I collected my booty. I pushed her into a room and bolted it from outside. I then wrote on a piece of paper: 'You rogues! Your mind is as crooked as your body.

You're in the habit of robbing wayfarers and guests. I can easily hand you over to the authorities, but I want to give you a chance to change your ways. You've a large compound; you shall grow vegetables and fruits and make a livelihood out of them. All the treasure I've taken from here today will be given over to an orphanage.' I left the note in the pocket of a dress hanging there."

After narrating the story, Karthikeya remarked to his wife: "They changed their ways and are now earning a livelihood from the produce they grow. I was happy when I saw them busy in their garden. That's why I laughed."

Manohari was proud of her husband. "You're not only wise, but clever, too; you've succeeded in not only making them turn a new leaf but helping them to reform themselves.



A Dictionary in Seven Years

Any mention of the name of Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) brings to one the memory of his great work – the first ever *Dictionary of the English language*. Johnson, who had started on a literary career by translating a book, *Travels in Abyssinia*, when he was only 25 years old, toyed with the idea of a dictionary for a few years before he prepared a 'plan' and sent it to several booksellers. Many of them showed interest in the project and responded. He demanded \$1,575, which included the remuneration to be paid to the copyists. He employed six of them to assist him. He would first write down the words and then explain their origin and their meaning. He would also mention their usage supported by quotations from books and authors. He chose such good passages that the user would not stop with knowing the meaning of a word but go on reading those passages with pleasure. These days, a dictionary is seldom read; it is only referred to!

Johnson had heard of the Earl of Chesterfield, who used to encourage authors and publication of their works. He sent his 'plan' to the Earl, in the hope that the nobleman might come forward to help the publication of the dictionary. Chesterfield commended the project but



did not extend any help as Johnson expected. The work took Johnson almost seven years (1747-54) to complete. On the eve of its publication, the Earl of Chesterfield wrote two articles in a newspaper called *The World*, recommending the dictionary to the public. He was expecting the Dictionary to be

dedicated to him! Johnson, in a letter, thanked him for the articles, but reminded him how he "waited in your outward rooms and was repulsed from your door... have brought it at last to the verge of publication without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, and one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before".

The publisher was one Miller. When Johnson's messenger came back after delivering the last sheet, he asked the boy how Miller had received it. The messenger said, "Sir, he said, 'Thank God, I have done with him'." To which Johnson remarked, "I am glad he thanks God for anything." He himself thanked God for an end to the seven-year toil.

Four years later, he lost his mother, and found himself so steeped in poverty that he had to borrow money for her funeral. He wrote the story, *Rasselas*, in just seven days to repay the loan.



Puzzling!

Kandappa was a grocer. He would take the produce from his farm to the nearest towns and sell it there. Murugappa was his only son; he wished that the boy took to the same business, and began teaching him the tricks of the trade.

One day, he called his son and said, "I heard that Ponnappa of Punyanagar wants to dispose of the produce in his possession. You go to him and examine the stuff and find out its quality. Afterwards, we shall go to him and strike a bargain."

Murugappa started for Punyanagar early morning the next day. By the time he returned, it was well past dusk, and all the while Kandappa was a worried man. He was greatly relieved when he saw Murugappa back home. "Punyanagar is just next door, and you took a whole day to go

there and come back! Why was there such a delay?" he queried.

"Father, you had asked me to examine the stock of cereal with him, didn't you?" Murugappa protested. "Ponnappa has a hundred bags for sale. I had to open every sack and examine samples from each sack. By the time I was through, it was already dark."

"You're a fool, Murugappa!" said an angry Kandappa. "You don't examine every morsel to find out if the rice in the pot is well boiled, do you? There was no need to examine the stuff in every bag!"

The next day, Kandappa had to go away on business, leaving Murugappa at home, alone. A trader, called Nagappa, came in search of Kandappa. He owed Kandappa some ten thousand rupees. He had brought the money in ten bags of one thou-



sand rupees each. He handed the bags to Murugappa. The boy checked a few of the bags and found that each one had a thousand rupees. He sent away Nagappa.

When Kandappa returned, his son told him about Nagappa and the money left by him. "Nagappa? He's a cheat!" remarked Kandappa. "Did you check the whole amount?"

"No, I didn't, father!" said Murugappa coolly. "I wanted to, but then I remembered what you had told me. So, I went about checking only two or three bags and they had a thousand rupees each. I surmised that the rest

of the bags would also have the same amount."

Kandappa was shocked. He now opened every bag and counted the money. It was short by two thousand rupees! "What's this, Murugappa? See how he had cheated you. How stupid you were! You should have counted all the bags!"

"That's really strange, father!" Murugappa argued. "You only told me about the rice in the boiling pot. And now you say I should have tasted every morsel! Where do I stand?"

**Never preach beyond your experience
Fury wasteth as patience lasteth
The path of Virtue is the path of Peace
We increase our wealth when we lessen our desires
Providence may change, but the promise must stand**

BRAVO!

Once, the kingdom of Magadha was attacked by the army of Anga. But they were routed. The King of Magadha complimented his soldiers and sent them back with pensions and presents. When they reached their respective places, the people gave them a rousing reception.

Among them was Balaveer. He boasted that he had single-handedly hacked to death a thousand Anga soldiers. The villagers hailed him as a hero. "But you had only cut their limbs; why didn't you sever their heads?" a villager asked him, to the hearing of others.

Balaveer had a ready answer. Without batting an eyelid, he said, "I didn't get a chance to cut their heads! Someone had already severed them!"





What is the difference between "Committee" and "Commission"?

– Jyotiranjana Biswal, Dhenkanal

A Committee is a group of people who represent a larger group or organisation and who make decisions or plans on behalf of the organisation. The All India Congress Committee (AICC) is the representative body of the Indian National Congress and takes decisions on behalf of the Congress. Bigger organisations generally will have an executive 'committee' and sometimes its 'sub-committees' to attend to the day-to-day activities. Whereas a Commission is a group of people appointed by the Government to find out something or control something. In India, we have the Planning Commission, Election Commission, Census Commission, Finance Commission, and numerous other Commissions appointed for specific purposes or which are given specific assignments.

Who is the founder of the modern printing machine?

– Kshyamanidhi Senapati, Padampur

Johann Gutenberg (1398-1468) of Mainz, Germany, is generally credited with inventing the movable printing type which revolutionised the printing technique. Earlier, an entire page used to be hand-engraved, smeared with ink, and pressed against paper. Movable types had to be "locked" inside a frame or "chase", before printing.

CORRECTION: Reader M.H. Rahman, of Bangalore, informs us that the only national park in India in the midst of a lake (see Chandamama Supplement, February 1994) is Keibul-Lamjo in Manipur (and not Madhupur). He adds that Keibul-Lamjo is the only floating national park in the world, and it has one of the rarest species – the Brown antlered deer.



Say "Hello" to text books and friends
'Cause School days are here again
Have a great year and all the best
From Wobbit, Coon and the rest!





It's time to go back to school again. Time for text
books. Time for games. Time to meet old friends.
And make new ones. Time to start studying
again. Because there's so much to learn about
the world around you.

From all of us here at Chandamama, have a
great year in school. And remember to tell us
what you've learnt everyday, when you
come home from school !

THE

H A N D A M A M A
C O L L E C T I O N



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



M. Lakshmi



M. Lakshmi

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The prize for March '94 goes to:-

Mr. Raju Samal

C/O R.K. Samal

Narendrapur, Ghanteswar

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The winning entry : "My Darling" "My Dolls"

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—Landon

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